| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Marty Rehbein |
| **To:** | Grp. City Council and City Web Site |
| **Cc:** | Dayna Causby; "Bradley Seaman"; Mike Haynes |
| **Subject:** | Ward redistricting questions |
| **Date:** | Friday, February 22, 2019 12:39:59 PM |

---

At Committee of the Whole this week there were some questions raised by committee members. Here are some answers

Heather Harp asked at what point does Missoula's growth trigger a conversation about the number of wards.
The number of wards (6) and representatives of each (2) are in the City's charter. To amend these parameters requires a proposed charter amendment and a vote of the people. The 2006 local government study commission placed a proposal on the ballot (which failed) to increase the number of wards to 9 and decrease the number of representatives of each to 1—meaning there would have been a 9 member city council.

Heidi asked if city elections are always mail in? She wondered if the elections office has any input on the number of ballots that have to be printed.
Heidi, thanks for serving as an election judge! Under state law, mail ballot elections are optional for city elections. Traditionally voter turnout has increased with mail ballot elections and costs are much less than a polling place election. Since 2007, the Council has adopted a resolution notifying the election administrator of the city's desire to conduct the City election by mail, and the election administrator has approved the request. Conversely the election administrator can initiate the request and the governing body can object within certain parameters. Here's the law if you'd like a deeper dive:
https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0130/chapter_0190/part_0020/sections_index.html

Ward redistricting doesn't have an impact on the number of ballots that have to be printed for an election. The number of ballots printed depends on the number of eligible voters in an election. Ward redistricting affects some voters. If voters are moved from one ward to another, the Elections Office must send each affected voter a new voter registration card with their updated ward information. (The same is true when the City annexes property and when the legislature redistricts) You mentioned the situation with different ballot styles for precincts at your polling place during last November's election. I'll check with County Elections officials, but I believe this situation is inevitable given the circumstances. Those were, the City Council voted to place a city ballot measure on the statewide general election ballot. Statewide election results are tallied and reported by precinct. There are some precincts in Missoula that include both City/County and County only voters. So when the City places a measure on an election ballot that is tallied by precinct, it results in some "split precincts" and the need for more ballot styles for those split precincts. Why? Because City voters receive a ballot that includes the city ballot measure, and County only voters' ballots should not include the city measure. I've copied Elections office staff if they have anything to add.

**Marty Rehbein, CMC**
Legislative Services Director/City Clerk
City of Missoula
435 Ryman
Missoula. MT  59802
mrehbein@ci.missoula.mt.us
406.552.6078
www.ci.missoula.mt.us/cityclerk